

UCAR Members
October 14, 2008

Eric J. Barron
Director, NCAR



NCAR

28% of a Year

- Tradition
 - A Year in Review (in written report)
 - Management changes
 - Research, Facilities, Service highlights
 - Promotions
 - A little bragging (much to brag about)
- This Year – partial year – new Director – break from tradition – key areas of work over the last 3 months



Philosophy

- What actions can we take to make a great institution more efficient and effective?
 - Target list based on wide-ranging conversations
 - Your opportunity to add comments, additions, subtractions



(1) Are we thinking strategically?

- **Current Strategic Plan:** Inclusive; many targets of “improved understanding;” doesn’t sufficiently guide investment/management
- **Proposed Themes:**
 - Imperatives – what we must be successful at to be a national center
 - Frontiers – the new directions that require new investment and new partnerships
 - Fabric – collegiality, community, mentoring, international role
- **Key:** Clear priorities, actionable, demonstrable



(1) Are we thinking strategically? (continued)

– Process:

- Units, groups – follow template (build from units)
- Strategic Planning Council – broad thinkers; 4 BOT members
- “All hands” presentations
- Executive Council – budget and test “doable”
- Community Input throughout – all advisory boards must meet; Council membership includes BOT; NSF; UCAR community meeting



(2) Is management organized to be successful?

- **Management costs at NCAR** – how can we reduce costs and increase dollars for our science, facilities and service mission
 - Combined ASP/Deputy Director position is first example
- **Access to Leadership**
 - Number of levels and layers inhibit



(2) Is management organized to be successful? (continued)

– Review of the Institutes

- Great objective and purpose
 - new venues for University-NCAR interactions
 - new and innovative research directions
 - research that would cross traditional boundaries
- The three (ISSE, IMAGE, and TIIMES) are very different – note IMAGE is highly regarded
- Issues (survey results from 66 individuals involved in Institutes)
 - Budget (sufficient / competing no net gain / difficulty in planning)
 - Burden on scientists (more supervisors for the same dollars; more reporting)
 - How much would happen anyway?
 - Is there a better way to organize?



(3) Do we have a sufficiently deliberate focus on our external relationships?

- New partnerships (particularly for frontiers?)
- Relationships with universities
- A comprehensive look at graduate fellows, post-doctoral fellows, visitor programs
- Alternative funding sources – non-NSF
- Advisory Groups
 - 18 so far and counting; little conduit to the Director
 - Lab based; divisions with representatives on lab advisory committees; chairs or vice-chairs make up NCAR Advisory Committee (each chair hears reports of other labs – requests, needs, etc)
 - Increased science connectivity to the Director



(4) Is our reporting consistent, efficient and does it signal the importance of our objectives?

– Wealth of Reports – enormous effort

– Can we create a synergistic effort

- Strategic Plan

- Program Operating Plan (POP)

- Annual Budget Review

 - Comments: way of life, starts as soon as it ends, what takes the greatest effort is the least used – need to be more effective, ensure timely iteration and feedback

- POP Progress Report

- NCAR Annual Review and Lab Annual Reviews

 - 100's of pages – uncertain of the impact



(5) Do we ensure an appropriate connection between budgets and planning?

- **Strategic Plan (SP) with a budget**
 - 3 sources: Internal to the unit; NCAR; external
- **ABR – need it to be effective and efficient and tied to SP**
- **Budgets that ensure growth in units as individuals retire**
 - We have powerful and exceptional units – do we ensure renewal while also promoting opportunity for new directions? We need a good balance.
 - Retirement: Junior to unit; \$ difference for new initiatives



(5) Do we ensure an appropriate connection between budgets and planning? (continued)

– Transparency on our financial health

- Town meetings; working together
- Philosophy - knowing the facts is less of a worry than not knowing?



(6) Do our review processes promote success in our mission?

- **Reviewing our management/leadership team**
 - Many seek accountability, but....
 - Promote good leadership through feedback
 - Develop a simple tool for all managers
 - Allow longitudinal analysis
- **The ARG Process (Promotion Review)**
 - e.g. Robust annual review that presages promotion review
- **Key – are we sending the signals that promote what we value**



(7) How can we enhance success through workforce management?

– Significant task underway for UCAR/NCAR

– Some Examples:

- The notion of tenure vs. job security
- Sabbaticals; leaves
- Administrative position vs. administrative supplement
- Exceptions vs. policies that are robust



(8) Can we promote an even more effective relationship between UCAR and NCAR

– Re-focusing our collaboration

- Re-compete exacerbated issue
- Many times solely a matter of communication
- What are the real examples?
- When do we need independence? When do partnerships improve efficiency?



- What Else?
- Comments on list so far?
- Beyond the list – other questions?

